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"Socialist
Workers Party"
March 3, 1965
D-MS-1090



CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

Analysis

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

National Plenum

In the interval between its national conventions, which are held every other year, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) usually holds one or two national plenums. Only full and alternate members of the SWP National Committee and special, invited guests are eligible to attend a plenum--the highest authority in the SWP between national conventions. At a plenum held recently, the SWP heard a report on the international Trotskyite movement, expelled nine members, reviewed its 1964 presidential campaign, made plans for future activities, and elected national officers. The SWP, which has been designated as subversive pursuant to Executive Order 10450, was formed in 1938 and is a militantly revolutionary party based upon the theories of Marx, Engels, and Lenin as interpreted by the late Leon Trotsky.

Foreign "Observers"

SWP member Joseph Hansen reported to the plenum on international developments. Hansen and his wife, Reba, have been on foreign assignment for the SWP as "observers" of developments in the Fourth International (FI), the Trotskyite counterpart of the defunct Communist International, or Comintern. The FI had split in 1953 when James Cannon, one of the founders of the SWP, helped to form the International Committee in opposition to the policies of Michel Pablo (M. Raptis) of France, then leader of the International Secretariat of the FI. Although the SWP had friendly relations with the International Committee for ten years, it cooperated, through Hansen, during 1963 with elements of the International Secretariat in an effort to reunify the FI by forming a United Secretariat, despite vigorous objections by the Socialist Labor League (SLL), British Trotskyite organization.

Several Problems

Hansen reported that the United Secretariat of the FI is confronted with several problems. According to Hansen, the United Secretariat is encountering difficulties in its efforts to: (1) combine all forces in order to build a new team; (2) learn to work together; (3) bring in sections, such as those in Latin America, which have been slow in responding to reunification; (4) reach agreement on problems pertaining to world events; (5) make it possible for all sections to participate in reunification; and (6) create an international publicatio

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which will block hostile tendencies from establishing competitive propaganda organs. During the plenum, SWP National Secretary Farrell Dobbs announced that the foreign assignment of Joseph and Reba Hansen will terminate during the latter part of 1965.

Funds for Bolivian Trotskyites

Concerning Trotskyite sections in Latin America, the SWP pledged in January to send a minimum of \$1,000 in the form of individual contributions to the Trotskyite Party in Bolivia, which had requested financial assistance from all Trotskyite parties in the Western Hemisphere in order to take advantage of a "rising revolutionary situation." In this regard, SWP National Committeeman Asher Harer claimed the Trotskyites in Bolivia had taken a very active part in the overthrow of the government of President Victor Paz Estenssoro in November, 1964, by a military junta. He added that the Trotskyites suffered a major share of the casualties during the military action surrounding the overthrow, but had gained respect, and now have a tremendous opportunity in Bolivia.

Another SWP Split

During its stormy history, the SWP has expelled several minority factions which went on to form rival Trotskyite organizations. In July, 1964, nine SWP members, led by former SWP National Committeeman Tim Wohlforth, were suspended from SWP membership. The plenum adopted a motion to expel the nine members of the "Wohlforth tendency." Despite these expulsions, total SWP membership remains at a little over 500, a figure that has been relatively constant for over ten years. The Wohlforth group, now known as the American Committee for the Fourth International, cooperates with the British SLL and the International Committee of the FI. Like the SWP, the Wohlforth group hopes to create spheres of influence in the Negro community and among other minority groups in the United States.

Drop in Voter Support

In a political report to the plenum, Farrell Dobbs admitted that the SWP lost some support in the 1964 presidential election, but claimed it would realize gains from the contacts its candidates made in the Negro community and on college campuses during the campaign. In 1964, the SWP selected Clifton DeBerry and Edward Shaw as candidates for President and Vice President of the United States. Shaw is the SWP National Organizational

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Secretary and DeBerry, a Negro and albino, is Dobbs' son-in-law. The candidates' names appeared on the ballot in eleven states, and the SWP boasted that it was the first "political party" to nominate a Negro for President. "The Militant," weekly SWP newspaper with a press run of 8,825 copies, claimed in December that DeBerry received 33,327 votes. In contrast, the 1960 SWP presidential candidate received 40,174 votes.

Convention Dates Set

During the plenum, Edward Shaw announced that the SWP National Office requires \$4,500 every month to maintain its activities. The plenum selected September 3 through September 6, 1965, as the dates for the next SWP national convention. The preconvention discussion of issues is scheduled to begin on June 1. Key issues to be discussed are economic conditions and the status of Negroes in the United States. The plenum did not create any surprises when it selected the following SWP national officers: James Cannon, National Chairman; Farrell Dobbs, National Secretary; and Edward Shaw, National Organizational Secretary.

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- 3 -